

**Parts of a Palm**

Master Gardener Education & Development  
Palm Beach County Extension  
531 North Military Trail  
West Palm Beach, FL 33415-1311  
561-233-1759  
FAX ~ 561-233-1782  
<http://pbcgov.com/coopext/horticulture/>

Information for this brochure was gathered from:

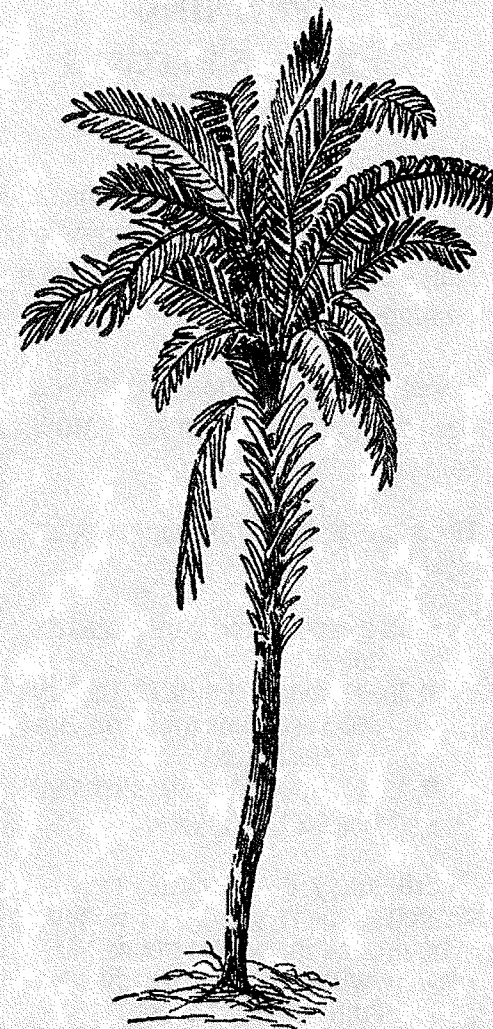
*"Palm Pointers"*  
Cooperative Extension Service  
*"Pruning Landscape Trees and Shrubs"*  
Edward F. Gilman & Robert J. Block  
*"Pruning Palms"*  
Edward F. Gilman & Nathan J. Eisner  
*"Pruning Palms"*  
Horticulture Palm Pointers  
*"Do Not Over Trim Palm Trees"*  
Horticulture Trimming Palms  
*"Pruning Palms"*  
Edward F. Gilman  
*"ANSI A300 Palm Pruning Standards"*  
Palm Beach County  
Environmental Resources Management  
*"Be Prudent Pruning Palms"*  
Gardening Tips by John Begeman  
*"Protect Florida's Vulnerable State Tree:  
Sabal Palm"*  
Amy Mosher & Friends  
*"An Illustrated Guide to Pruning"*  
Delmar Publishers  
*"Betrock's Guide to Landscape Palms"*  
Alan Meerow  
Diagram *"Parts of a Palm"* modified from  
*"Betrock's Guide to Landscape Palms"*



"In accordance with the provisions of ADA,  
this document may be requested in a different format."  
The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an  
Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research,  
educational information and other services only to individuals and  
institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race,  
creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation,  
marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations.  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service,  
University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M. University  
Cooperative Extension Program, and  
Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating.

LS ~4/06

## Pruning Palms



# Pruning Palms

## PROPER PRUDENT PRUNING PROTECTS PRECIOUS PALMS

Planting the **RIGHT PLANT** in the **RIGHT PLACE** is vital with palms. Many palms planted in the right place never require pruning.

Before you prune, analyze **WHY** you want to prune, and then know **HOW** to do it right.

**THE RIGHT REASONS** to prune a palm include:

- To remove dead and diseased fronds.
- To remove coconuts (for safety) and seed pods and fruit clusters (for aesthetics).
- To remove sprouts or stems to maintain a single trunk.

Unfortunately, if a palm has been planted in the wrong place, it may have to be pruned to remove fronds that interfere with structures, roadways or walks. Pruning under these circumstances must be done very carefully so as not to injure the palm.

Green fronds make food for the tree. Removing any healthy green fronds steals the palm's source of food, permanently stunts growth and invites insects and disease. It makes the palm heart cold-sensitive and susceptible to winter frosts and freezes.

Older fronds store nutrients needed for new growth. Removing the older fronds removes the palm's stored nutrients and hinders growth.

Simultaneous excessive yellowing of many older fronds is a sign of nutrient deficiency. Make sure palms are properly fertilized and receiving the correct amount of water to keep the palms healthy. Pruning when there are nutrient deficiencies further stresses the palm and can risk its survival.

Harsh over-pruning of palms is a standard practice in the spring in preparation for hurricane season, with the mistaken intention of trying to protect the palm from high winds. Palms need no special protection from high winds and the practice of over-pruning has been proven by University research to actually hurt the palm.

Over-pruned palms get bottlenecked trunks. The problem multiplies every time over-pruning is done. In high winds this stressed and weakened point can actually cause the palm to break off and die ~ the exact effect that over-pruning was intending to prevent.

**DO IT RIGHT.** Proper pruning avoids cutting any green fronds. However, if you must remove green fronds, remove **ONLY** those where the base of the frond sticks out from the trunk pointing downward (below horizontal ~ the 3 and 9 on the face of a clock).

Cut the frond close to the base and begin the cut from the underside so the frond will cut off cleanly and avoid damaging the trunk.

## YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Do not cut green fronds. Remember, green fronds are food for the palm.
- Say **NO** to landscapers who want to prune green fronds. Exclude annual harsh pruning from your landscape contract.
- Prune only dead and diseased fronds. Exceptions to the rule:
  - Low hanging fronds that obstruct walkways and traffic or interfere with structures.
  - Coconuts (for safety) and seed pods and fruit clusters (for aesthetics).
- Don't let anyone climb your palm using spiked shoes. Spikes damage the trunk and trunk damage does not heal.
- Help spread the facts. Copy this information and help educate others.

